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The Editor's relief at having succeeded in sending out 'the last number of *LCM*' 'on or before the first of the month', as used to be his proud boast, is perhaps matched by the surprise of overseas subscribers at having received it and the previous one before their predecessor. If this was in fact the case, it is the result of a new deal made with the Post Office by a consortium of Northern Universities, by which all their overseas mail is sent by air at a price affordable even by *LCM*, affordable, that is, at the new rates and affording retrospective justification of them, which, the Editor notices, are still less than those of his more reputable contemporaries. They have been simplified, so that there are now only two rates, sterling for the UK and Europe and dollar for the rest of the world, but the Editors still set their faces against a higher rate for institutions (which have in any case to bind the numbers – and would all who can draw to their library's notice the fact that there was no separate number 10 [Dec.] for 1988, but that 9 & 10 was a double number, an attempt to catch up with arrears which they promise never to repeat, having learned by the number of claims that it causes more problems than it solves): they are, however, introducing a special rate for undergraduates, graduate students, and the retired, all of whom will doubtless wish to provide evidence of their status. In this country the last named are referred to in Departments of Extension Studies or Continuing Education as 'those in receipt of the State Retirement Pension' (and on road signs as 'elderly persons', now that 'old' has been outlawed as a sign of 'ageism') but since this offer applies all over the world that phrase cannot be used here.

But it is time to let the b...y dog see the b...y rabbit (which the Editor believes to be an Antipodean proverb but which he may have himself invented) and set out the rates.

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It may seem inappropriate, even insensitive, if the Editor goes on to perpend upon the price of in particular texts, but the subject was forcibly brought to his attention when preparing booklists of prescribed texts for students for the coming session, one of those administrative chores which he will be so glad to escape. The cheapest one seemed well over £5, and over £10 was more common, and a student might be asked to buy seven or eight. And of course, as he well knows, they do not, and even seem to find difficulty in locating the perhaps daunting standard texts and editions in a University Library. He recalls that one Department founded something called the Piranha Press, which produced fairly cheap photo-copies of

texts, but he has seen nothing of its products of late, and has begun to toy with the idea that *LCM* should produce something of the sort, to order, without violating Copyright, and he would like to hear if this kite produces any response. (Incidentally, the price of Professor MacMullen's book, reviewed by F. W. Walbank in the July number, is not \$18.95 but £18.95).

The Department of Education and Science in this country has recently published a report on the status of Classics in the schools, of which the Editor really must get hold of a copy rather than simply relying on newspaper reports, which indicate that the subject relies a good deal on dedicated teachers and pupils who study especially Greek out of hours (though there is nothing new in this). But a journalist in a recent *Daily Telegraph* 'sheds no tears at Latin and Greek's decline', adding that 'I haven't a tear to shed for the Classics. If they're done for, it's the classicists who dunnit', after asking 'can some one tell me what's wrong with using good translations?'.

How we are supposed to have done it appears to be by over-estimating both the difficulty of Latin and its value as a means of encouraging 'clear thinking and accurate use of English'; in fact, as was suggested last month, that we alienated a now influential generation by the way in which compulsory Latin was taught. This is being countered by making Classics and Classical Studies more attractive, with the concomitant danger that it may be made into a soft option for lower streams in the schools, and also in due course in the Universities. Many older academics cringe at the idea of 'selling the Classics' and would prefer to 'maintain standards' by retreating into small monastic departments where they can teach the linguistically gifted and highly motivated the traditional language-based classics. But, again as was suggested last month, we need a wide base of Classical Studies from which to recruit this 'very small remnant'.

These are matters which the Editor commends for open discussion in Departments and in the new Committee set up by the Classical Societies (the activities of which deserve greater publicity, which the Editor would be happy to give it) and to its spokes-person. One thing which they could do is to provide an answer to the journalist's final question: 'what is wrong with using good translations?'. And in giving it they should face two divisions which are often glossed over: that between some historians and philosophers on the one hand, who gladly accept that their disciplines can adequately be taught with the use of *Translated Texts for Historians* (this is a puff, and may be taken to include *TTPPhilosophers* – how many of whom read Kant in German?) supplemented by three years' study of one language from scratch, and those for whom a generic term does not exist, belle-lettrists being too pejorative. But even among these students of literature there is a division between those who believe that classical literature can be adequately studied in translation and those for whom translations, and criticism based upon them, expose students not to the literature of Greece and Rome but to an arbitrary modern construct based upon it.

What, indeed, is a 'good' translation? The recently published collected papers of Adam Parry (which is one of the increasing pile of books which the Editor hopes himself to review) contains four interesting papers on translations, one a criticism of Robert Graves' *Anger of Achilles* and Rieu's Penguin translations of Homer, one on Fitzgerald's *Odyssey*, another on 'Classical Philology and Literary Criticism', and the fourth a comparison of the Penguin translations of Herodotus and Thucydides with older translations. Perhaps the Editor likes these papers so much because they reinforce his own preference for Lang, Leaf and Myers and Butcher and Lang (who 'have the virtue of accuracy') for Homer and for Crawley for Thucydides: but he accepts that, like the King James Bible and the 1662 prayer book, and like Chaucer, these translations may themselves require translations for today's students.

But, as always, it is for the Editor to point to what he feels to be present areas of concern, and for others, who, as they tell him, will have to live with it, to deal with them as they think best.



**John Carter** (Royal Holloway & Bedford New College, : *Plautus'* *ballistarium*)

University of London)

*LCM* 14.9 (Nov.1989), 130-131

*I should like to thank my colleague Professor J. B. Hall for improvements to this note.*

D.B.Campbell (*LCM* 14.7 [Jul.1989], 98-100) argues convincingly against the interpretation of the rare word *ballistarium* as a special type of platform for artillery. Instead, he proposes to take the word as signifying any artillery emplacement, even an tower adapted 'to accommodate the catapults and protect

them from rain and enemy fire'. While I am sure that his conclusion is on the right lines, it is the purpose of this note to suggest that the evidence of Plautus (who is, after all, as Campbell points out, the only person to use the word in full) does not have to be set aside with the imputation that his technical knowledge was deficient.

The relevant lines of Plautus are:

*itaque hic scelestus est homo leno Lycus,  
quoi iam infortuni intenta ballistast probe  
quam ego haud multo post mittam e ballistario.* *Poenulus* 200-202.

Campbell, observing that Plautus' handling of the vocabulary of artillery can be eccentric, writes 'It is usually argued from his mistaken use of *ballista* to signify the missile that he will have used *ballistarium* for the engine itself', and is content to leave the passage aside. But is Plautus wrong?

*ballistarium* belongs to a clear-cut group of words. The examples which follow of Latin nouns in *-orium* or *-arium* do not pretend to be more than a random selection, and I have tried to consider only words attested in Republican or early Imperial Latin (references may be found in Lewis and Short, a satisfactory enough guide for these purposes). The fundamental semantic function of the great majority of them is to designate a space in which something (whether abstract or concrete) exists, happens, or is kept. Sometimes they indicate a quality which may be obtained in the space indicated: *caldarium*, *frigidarium*, *viridarium*. Sometimes they indicate an activity: *diribitorium*, *saginarium* (Varro, a fattening-stall for animals), *sudatorium*, *trigarium*. Most commonly they indicate a space or receptacle to contain something or someone: *aerarium*, *armamentarium*, *armarium*, *columbarium*, *quaestorium*, *rationarium* (where *rationes* = 'accounts'), *rosarium*, *solarium* (where *sol* = 'sunlight'), *tabularium*, *vestiarium*, *vinarium*. Naturally, there are exceptions: for example, *tentorium* means something stretched, *vasarium* (presumably from *v. aes*) means a governor's equipment allowance. But the presumption must be that, in so far as a Latin speaker felt it necessary, the noun he normally understood with these substantial adjectives was *aedificium*, or less probably *spatium*.

If this is correct, it is quite unnecessary to suppose that Plautus thought *ballista* meant the missile and *ballistarium* the engine. Let us give him the credit for being mildly *au fait* with the vocabulary of war, in an era in which artillery had been in existence for two hundred years, and when a large number of his audience must have been all too familiar with the engines of war, thanks to Hannibal. We shall then translate *intenta ballistast* as 'my catapult is aimed'. Then in the next line, if we adopt the interpretation of words in *-arium* / *-orium* suggested above, the *ballistarium* must be the place where Milphio keeps, services, or even manufactures his dread engines of metaphorical war. This makes perfect sense, and is a good piece of comic play with language, suggesting that Milphio (as suits his role) has a storehouse specially for such devices. Plautus may even have invented the word as a joke, but this makes no difference to the argument. Milphio does not actually *fire* his catapult from the *ballistarium*, and I would prefer to take the basic meaning of the word to be 'catapult-shed'. This of course does not rule out Campbell's interpretation, which will represent a slight mutation, or special use, derived from what I believe to be the natural meaning (even if that be a comic *hapax*) in Plautus' day. To the objection that one does not aim artillery at a target before getting it out of store, I would say that Milphio is not explaining things with the narrative logic of a Julius Caesar. First he says 'I've got a device all ready for this blighter', then elaborates as a sort of afterthought 'and that device I'm going to get out of my store'. As for *mittam*, perhaps we have another joke: Milphio will really 'whizz' his *ballista* from its lair to use against the ponce.

In the light of this, the pair of inscriptions from High Rochester (*RIB* 128011) which record the repair or construction *a solo* of *ballist(aria)* become extremely straightforward. What more natural than special sheds for these large and awkward pieces of equipment? As for the papyri, if one wishes in *P.Mich.* 455b recto to reject Fink's attractive supplement *custodiarum bal(nei)*, *bal(listarum)* seems no less plausible, as an alternative, than *bal(listariorum)*, and the enigmatic fatigue-duty *ballio* of *P.Gen.Lat.* I verso, Part V, is best left out of the discussion (R. O. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus* [Michigan 1971], 201-3 no.52c, and 106-114 no.9). *ballistarium* appears with any certainty only three times in Latin, and only once in full. Plautus' evidence deserves to be given its due weight,, since it leads to what looks like a sensible conclusion.

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MA.Greenwood (St Augustine's College, : *Venus intervenes: five episodes in the Aeneid*  
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LCM 14.9 (Nov.1989), 132-136

In the course of the *Aeneid* Venus, in her role as goddess-mother, shows a deep and passionate concern for her son's safety and well-being in four well-defined ways<sup>1</sup>. Firstly, she consults various deities in order to seek information, reassurance, favours and peace of mind, all with regard to Aeneas; and further schemes and engineers with those gods to ensure that he should come to no serious harm. Secondly, by acting of her own accord and as her own personal envoy, she descends upon him in a series of visits whose main purpose is to provide him with useful, sometimes crucial information, often as a result of the previous meetings with her fellow Olympians, mentioned above. Thirdly, though not herself present, she sends signs or symbols which are immediately recognisable to Aeneas as coming at his mother's instigation, which help cheer, assist and guide him in his quest. But Venus' divine activity in the epic – at least her behaviour *vis-à-vis* Aeneas – does not confine itself to major plans, complicated strategies, elaborate disguises etc., which are just some of the varied aspects of the goddess's methods of self-involvement. In fact, there is one area – my fourth 'category' – in which the goddess performs small-scale 'miracles' which benefit her son greatly either in the form of simple 'cosmetic' improvements or in more immediate life-saving intervention, where there is usually no other evidence of unfair advantage over Aeneas than perhaps that the son of Venus is being inconvenienced in some way. It is with this final area that I shall concern myself here. I shall deal with the incidents, five in number, from the point of view both of the contextual appropriateness of the intervention and of the benefits derived by Aeneas from each separate action.

The first book of the *Aeneid* provides us with two examples of the goddess's 'magic wand' at work, so to speak, for her son's protection. Immediately after Aeneas' rebuke of his mother's 'cruel' theatricals in the woodland encounter (*Aen.* 1.305-10) we read:

*at Venus obscuro gradientis aere saepsit,  
et multo nebulae circum dea fudit amictu,  
cernere ne quis eos neu quis contingere posset  
moliriue moram aut ueniendi poscere causas.* 1.411-414.

Later, at the very moment when the same protective mist is removed, we note that Aeneas' features have undergone a divinely inspired enhancement indicative of his part-immortal parentage (1.586-591).

As far as the contexts of these passages are concerned, it is evident that there is far more need for the poet to go to such lengths than there is for Venus at this point<sup>2</sup>. This becomes clear when we consider the possible motive behind Venus' involvement. Why, for example, does she feel the need to shelter, protect and embellish her son in the way she chooses? In the first instance, her actions are purely cautionary measures; for her mind has already been put at rest by the kind words and loving gestures from her

<sup>1</sup> These four divisions are purely arbitrary, and are used for the sake of convenient structuring. Some might well be broken down further to highlight material whose subtleties of treatment set it apart from the rest.

Venus' 'deep and passionate concern' seems to me assured, but for this downright unorthodox untraditional view of the goddess I offer no apology. Nor yet do I fully understand the persistent readiness of scholars over the years to refuse to present a fair, well-balanced picture of the goddess, but who instead are content to make perilously close equations between her and the Greek Aphrodite, doing undue injustice to one so fundamentally crucial to this particular foundation-story. For rare sensitivity to the character see Antonie Wlosok, *Die Göttin Venus in Vergils Aeneis*, Heidelberg 1967. For the more inevitable, erroneously standard reading see the recent volumes by Jasper Griffin, *Virgil*, Past Masters series, Oxford 1986, and R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Vergil's Aeneid*, Oxford 1986.

<sup>2</sup> Commentators remind us of the literary precedents for both the enshrouding mist and the beautification, citing Homer, *Od.* 7.14ff., Apollonius Rhodius 3.210ff., and Homer, *Od.* 23.156ff. (cf. *Od.* 6.229ff.) for the respective parallels. It would be difficult to establish a case of the poet's slavish borrowing from earlier epic for tradition's sake, for Vergil seems to be using his models as mere ideas upon which he is greatly to embroider, thus elevating simple touches of Homeric narrative convenience to the status of protracted devices of dramatic sophistication. Setting the Vergilian use of the mist device against the background of its Greek counterparts, R. G. Austin (*P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Primus*, Oxford 1971, p.144 at note on 411), maintains that 'Virgil uses the device with a deeper purpose: . . . The whole dramatic situation of 494-

father Jupiter, in the consultation scene at 1.223-296, and by the subsequent 'mission' of Mercury who, at the Almighty's bidding, descends to earth in order to prevent Carthaginian enmity (1.297-304)<sup>3</sup>. Nor is there any readily available reason why Venus should fear an unfavourable initial meeting of Aeneas with Dido, the result of his ignorance of the people with whom he comes into contact; for provision has been made for this too by her supplying a potted history of Dido's 'story so far' at his request while she is disguised as the Carthaginian huntress (1.338ff.). (I shall argue elsewhere in greater detail that Venus herself needs no other justification for her actions than that she feels them necessary, and therefore only we, the rational-minded readership, are left puzzled and scratching our heads.)

Vergil, on the other hand, puts the mist-cloud to good use by making it the very device through which Aeneas and Achates are allowed to witness, both visually and aurally, from the privileged standpoint of invisibility, the arrival of their fellow Trojan survivors and the nature of their welcome from the Carthaginians, especially Dido (1.509ff.). This prior knowledge is also important for Aeneas in that it contains explicit declarations for the survivors' unshaken faith in and dedication to their leader, which has remained strong even after the trauma of the recent sea-storms (1.544ff.). Vergil further exploits the temporary concealment by mist by having it removed shortly after Dido, addressing her audience, wishes the hero were among them:

*atque utinam rex ipse Noto compulsus eodem  
adforet Aeneas! . . .  
uix ea fatus erat cum circumfusa repente  
scindit se nubes et in aethera purgat apertum.* 1.575-6, 586-7.

And what of the beautification that Aeneas undergoes at this juncture? He appears to one and all thus:

*restitit Aeneas claraque in luce refulsit  
os humerosque deo similis; namque ipsa deorum  
caesariem nato genetrix lumenque iuuentae  
purpureum et laetos oculis adflarat honores:* 1.588-591.

Contextually this seems, if not exactly necessary, at least undetrimental, and, what is more, Dido is not the only one for whom the divine image is either intended or influential. For let us not forget the very important Trojan presence of Ilioneus and company in this scene. Trojan loyalty has just been sworn in what might reasonably be described as a tribute to a dead man (1.544-9). It is unknown up to this point whether Aeneas has survived, and therefore the unexpected, 'miraculous' arrival of one all but given up for dead, especially when invested with hitherto unseen beauty, could surely do nothing but increase the joy of reunion infinitely, while at the same time providing the first highly favourable and impressive glimpse of the hero for his later mistress and her subjects.

His divine aspect – as has already been stated – also testifies to his being sprung from a goddess, of course, and, in a mode of address found not infrequently throughout the poem, Dido's opening words to the hero are significantly *quis te, nate dea* (1.615). What Aeneas gains from his beautification is, on the one hand, a most awesome reunion with his comrades who already know, love and respect him (but for whom the very living proof of his survival would alone suffice), and, on the other, the influentially positive reception from and introduction to a foreign queen and her people, and a future liaison with both.

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578 is further dependent on the device.'; and, of the beautification of Aeneas, in the same literary context, Austin comments that 'Virgil's picture serves not merely this moment of his narrative, but sets the scene for a whole movement of future passion, in a way that goes far deeper than incidental decoration. . . . Virgil's setting is subtle and dramatic: Aeneas does not emerge, like Odysseus, from the sea or from a bath, but at the parting of a mysterious mist, in radiant light: a magic moment, of pregnant import.' (Ibid. p.185 at note on 589ff.).

<sup>3</sup> Since there is no direct evidence available from the text to suggest that Mercury's errand was made known to Venus, we cannot therefore rule out the interpretation that, if indeed the goddess was unaware of the envoy sent by Jupiter, then her apparently redundant measures to secure friendly relations between Trojans and Carthaginians become considerably more acceptable, if not wholly justifiable. On the other hand, though, there is no place for rationalizing when discussing Vergil's Venus and her inherently complex behavioural characteristics. It would come as no surprise, surely, to find Venus helping her son in Carthage however much divine groundwork had been done prior to his arrival: where Aeneas, his followers and their mission are concerned, Venus is quite often an obsessive goddess and mother.

(Further 'help' is afforded Aeneas here in the personally private attraction to and interest in him that Dido begins to foster; an attraction which is soon to gather vicious momentum at the royal banquet with the substitution of Amor for Ascanius. But this is an advantage only initially in the welcome scene, as it rapidly becomes disadvantageous in the course of the fourth book.)

The three remaining examples of Venus' feats appear late in the epic – all in the twelfth book. The first, the goddess's *tour de force* in the poem, is brought about when Venus adds the miraculous, healing and rehabilitating properties of the root of dittany from Mount Ida along with ambrosia and panacea to the water used by Iapyx to wash Aeneas' wound when he is lamed by an arrowhead lodged in his thigh (12.411ff.). Divine agency is suspected by Iapyx (12.427-9), but Aeneas makes no reaction to his words, so eager is he to return as soon as possible to the fighting (12.430ff.). The need for the mother to intervene at this critical point – apart from the obvious medical need – rests in the fact that the longer Aeneas is absent from the action (and consequently only present to our eyes in an incapacitated state), the less can he be portrayed in any heroic posture; Vergil needs no justification for making his goddess take life-saving measures where her son is concerned, and therefore I do not intend to justify what should be plain for all to see.

However, what is perhaps less obvious and more in need of explanation is the resulting effect of the cure: Aeneas is healed, naturally, but much more than that. Relieved of his pain, he is given a new lease of life, a new strength, and emerges refreshed, thirsty for the bounty and conquests of war:

*ille avidus pugnae suras incluserat auro  
hinc atque hinc oditque moras hastamque coruscat.  
postquam habilis lateri clipeus loricaque tergo est,  
Ascanium fuis circum complectitur armis,  
summaque per galeam delibans oscula fatur:  
'disce, puer, uirtutem ex me uerumque laborem,  
fortunam ex aliis. nunc te mea dextera bello  
defensum dabit et magna inter praemia ducet.  
tu facito, mox cum matura adoleuerit aetas,  
sis memor, et te animo repetentem exempla tuorum  
et pater Aeneas et auunculus excitet Hector'.* 12.430-440.

The medication has fortified him not only physically but also mentally, being encouraged by the incentive to do heroic deeds and display the *uirtus* and military resolve quintessential to the generation of himself and Hector, Ascanius' uncle. Also, the final line has important resonances, since it is a virtual verbatim repetition of Andromache's line to Aeneas at 3.343. Here, the words and the sentiment are addressed directly to Ascanius, whereas Andromache in Book Three is asking, in the boy's absence, whether he is inspired by the noble example of his father and uncle.

It is, I think, all-important at this point to be reassured of Aeneas' fighting spirit and warring instinct, admirably given the extension of a father's proud address to his son: his hope for the future and the continuation of a whole code of behaviour as typified by close members of the boy's own family. But for one far more necessary reason is the presentation of an avid Aeneas here more desirable, and that is this: while the wounded hero has been necessarily off-stage, Turnus has been placed gloriously in the lime-light, in what could be aptly described as an *aristeia*. For sixty lines (12.324-383) he is portrayed wreaking havoc and killing a good many Trojans and their allies. After such a display, the balance needs very much to be redressed – not least for the sake of the reader's/hearer's faith in the eponymous hero. What Vergil has given to Turnus he must also give to Aeneas; if not by equalling the numbers of dead immediately, at least in a dramatic build-up to an intended fruitful onslaught after time wasted in inactivity. We may note also that, while Turnus is launched into his attack with the simple, narrative *subita spe feruidus ardet* (12.325), Aeneas is given a splendid description of eleven lines (quoted above), six of which are in the form of a speech to his son (12.435-440).

The final examples of Venus' handiwork involve first the prompting of Aeneas to move against the Latin city (12.554-6), and lastly the release of his spear from the stubborn grip of the wild-olive stump in the grove sacred to Faunus (12.786-90); the latter – it would appear *prima facie* – as much out of pique at the unfair behaviour of the nymph Juturna as out of a wish to assist her son.

*hic mentem Aeneae genetrix pulcherrima misit*

*iret ut ad muros urbique aduerteret agmen  
ocius et subita turbaret clade Latinos.* (12.554-6).

Aeneas' change of plan inspired by his mother leads quite soon to the picture of the suicidal Queen Amata, a welcome shift of scene from the earlier battle picture immediately before Venus enters into the action.

Aeneas actually senses divine responsibility for his altered intention, though he thinks it the work of Jupiter rather than of Venus. Later, he announces to his men:

*'ne quis meis esto dictis mora; Iuppiter hac stat;  
neu quis ob inceptum subitum mihi segnior ito'.* (12.565-6).

Why, though, if Aeneas is the commander, does he not make this decision of his own accord? Apart from its having clearly more dramatic impact on his men to be told that the Almighty is with them and has, as it were, sanctioned the move through Aeneas, there seems precious little reason for Venus to involve herself here, other than perhaps the simplistic (and very weak) explanation that she is ever-watchful over him and decides on his behalf to try new tactics. This, however, will not do; and we must either be satisfied with being faced with a problem or simply make do with an unsatisfactory deduction such as the need for Vergil to make a divinity the author of the plan rather than risk any accusation of rashness being levelled at Aeneas.

W. S. Anderson, *The Art of the Aeneid* (Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969), p.96, comments: 'Since it is obvious that he can never catch up with Turnus, Aeneas needs some way of bringing Turnus to him. That is provided by a suggestion of Venus [*sic*]: attack the city of Latinus, compel Turnus to come to its defense'. Aeneas does indeed need to have his adversary before him, or at least have him sufficiently near to make confrontation a hopeful possibility; and Turnus does in fact come to the city's aid. But this still does not account for the fact that it is not Aeneas himself who makes the suggestion. On every other occasion when the goddess helps her son, it is manifestly clear that the aid given could only come from a second party and a divine second party at that (cf. in addition to the four other examples discussed here the sending of twin doves as guides to the Golden Bough at 6.190ff.; the fire and clangour of arms in the sky at 8.520ff.; and the dreadful revelation of the destructive deities Neptune, Juno and Pallas taking part in the toppling of Troy after the Helen episode, at 2.601ff.; none of which, quite obviously, could have been either foreseen or subsequently controlled).

This, however, is not the case with Venus' initiative concerning the Latins; for it was quite within Aeneas' mental and rationalizing capacity to arrive at the quite straightforward decision to storm the city, and the intriguing question still remains: why does Vergil make Venus rather than Aeneas the decision-maker here? This is a rare occasion indeed on which the goddess's actions are quite unfathomable, though the outcome of the intervention is clear and positive: Turnus is lured back on hearing first a hint of the unrest in Latium,

*attulit hunc illi caecis terroribus aura  
commixtum clamorem, arrectasque impulit auris  
confusae sonus urbis et inlaetabile murmur.* (12.617-9),

then next, from his sister, Juturna, in the shape of Metiscus, the charioteer,

*'ingruit Aeneas Italis et proelia miscet'* (12.628),

finally with the arrival of Saces, the Latin,

*'Turne, in te suprema salus, miserere tuorum.  
fulminat Aeneas armis summasque minatur  
deiecturum arces Italum excidioque daturum,  
iamque faces ad tecta uolant. in te ora Latini,  
in te oculos referunt;'. . .* (12.653-7).

Notwithstanding the prompting, however, the ultimate decision lies, of course, with Turnus himself, who, addressing Juturna, declares

*stat conferre manum Aeneae, stat, quidquid acerbi est,  
morte pati, neque me indecorem, germana, uidebis  
amplius. hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furorem.'* (12.678-680)

No interpretative problem arises, fortunately, in the case of the restored spear of Aeneas, where Venus' actions are quite intelligible. The weapon, thrown back at 12.711, has fallen far from its intended mark and becomes deeply imbedded in the stump of an oleaster or wild olive, sacred to the woodland deity

Faunus and which the Trojans have cut down unknowingly, along with many other trees, in order to make a clear space in which to commence fighting. Turnus, who has also become temporarily estranged from his weapon having unwittingly seized the sword of Metiscus in place of his own father's (12.735-7), the former arm then shattering into splinters on contact with Aeneas' divinely wrought weapon (12.739-41), sees the Trojans' apparent profanity in laying hands on the venerable tree stump as a not untimely opportunity to earn them some divine disfavour, by offering a prayer to Faunus (12.777-9), begging for pity and help by holding Aeneas' spear fast in its resting-place as a punishment for the impious act:

*Faune, precor, miserere' inquit 'tuque optima ferrum  
Terra tene, colui uestros si semper honores,  
quos contra Aeneadae bello fecere profanos.'*

This prayer is then fulfilled when Aeneas finds himself powerless to remove the weapon, and Turnus' sister, the nymph Juturna, transformed into the body of the charioteer Metiscus, hands back to Turnus the sword he was lacking (12.783-5). And it is precisely this *faux pas* on Juturna's part which angers Venus and urges her to treat her own with equal measure of divine liberality:

*quod Venus audaci nymphae indignata licere  
accessit telumque alta ab radice reuellit.* (12.786-7).

Nymphs were considered in antiquity as standing on a comparatively low rung of the divine hierarchical ladder, and Venus' obvious pique at such a stunt pulled by her inferior might be justified in exactly these terms; that is, if there were not some other, more reasonable justification for her manoeuvre, and one of a less obvious display of petty rivalry.

The key lies, I believe, in the interpretation of the words *nullo discrimine* (12.770). In the six random sources that I have consulted, namely five professional translations and one note on the line in question from a commentary, only one seems to offer what I would consider to be the only possible reading in this situation. C. Day Lewis (*Virgil, The Aeneid*, Oxford, *The World's Classics*, 1952) has 'with no regard for its sanctity'; Allen Mandelbaum (*The Aeneid of Virgil*, New York, Bantam Books, 1961) renders 'heedless of this custom'; H. R. Fairclough (*Loeb* 1960) prefers the rather bald 'heeding naught'; while W. F. Jackson Knight (Penguin 1958) gives 'But the Trojans had not recognized the sanctity of this stock'; Maurice Rat (*Virgile, L'Énéide*, Garnier Flammarion 1965) chooses '*sans faire de différence avec les autres arbres*'; finally, W. S. Macguinness (*Virgil Aeneid Book XII*, Bradda Books, 1978) prefers the expansion 'making no distinction between a holy tree and an ordinary one'.

This last example would be possible if there were no possibility of ambivalence in the understanding of the phrase 'making no distinction'. Jackson Knight translates correctly and, by so doing, points up the injustice of Juturna's behaviour in holding fast Aeneas' spear, and making of him a potential laughing-stock as he pulls, twists and heaves to free the spear. If, therefore, the Trojans are nominally guiltless and free from any charge of profanity, then Venus' intervention is not only warranted but also the only apparent course of action to take in order to show her indignation at both the unfair 'just deserts' of the Trojans and the complicity of a bold minor deity. Her countermove in restoring the weapon is an indication of her determination to right a wrong done to her son, who might have suffered untold damage for having committed, inadvertently and unwittingly, a minor infraction of an unwritten law in the woodland code.

Now Aeneas and Turnus are back on an even footing, anxious to resume the fight:

*olli sublimes armis animisque refecti,  
hic gladio fidens, hic acer et arduus hasta,  
adsistunt contra certamina Martis anhelii.* (12.788-90).

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**B. Harries** (Llanelli): *Back to the horse: symbol and narrative in Aeneid* 2

LCM 14.9 (Nov. 1989), 136-141

Here is a new approach to a small but irritatingly persistent problem in the *Aeneid*: why do the Greeks – or some of them – return into the wooden horse during the sack of Troy (2.400-401)? If my



approach to this question is on the right lines, it will have implications for the way we see the interconnections between the poem's episodes and for the factors which make for emphasis in the Virgilian narrative. I shall suggest that symbolic symmetry is sometimes attained at the expense of probability in the narrative sequence.

The problem is an old one. When the poem was still admired as a study in heroic virtue, C.G.Heyne commented on 401: *Fortē dictum nolis a poeta; nimis enim portentosum hoc et abhorrens a fama virtutis Achivorum, etsi turpi formidine adiecit. Certe sensum meum offendit in heroico carmine*<sup>1</sup>. Conington tried to save the day by assuming that Virgil must be talking of some very minor figures: 'The cowardice . . . described here is not likely to have been shown by any of the leaders of the Greeks'<sup>2</sup>. By the time Austin's edition appeared (1964), such preconceptions about the natures of heroes had vanished; Austin has no show of surprise. Williams (1972) is more forthright: 'The concept of the Greeks rushing back again into the wooden horse is most unconvincing'<sup>3</sup>.

In fact such a move is in the highest degree improbable as a strategy of escape. That some Greeks should, in the confusion of battle and darkness of night, seek refuge back in the ships is plausible enough. But faith in the narrative falters when we are asked to accept that others, presumably being chased by Trojans, run back to the horse and re-enter it in full view of their pursuers. Why should they lock themselves in an enclosure where they would be trapped by the surrounding Trojans and possibly burned alive (cf. 2.37)? What fugitives would enclose themselves where they would be so vulnerable to Aeneas and his men? And how did they re-enter the horse? Leaving was only possible *demissum . . . per funem* (262)<sup>4</sup>; are we to suppose that they re-entered the horse up the same rope, with the Trojans in hot pursuit?

I want to suggest an approach to this problem through a fuller understanding of the rich pattern of conceptual correspondence in the poem. We shall quickly see that the problem of 400-401 is connected with another curious feature of Virgil's narrative: what is the exact status of the horse in relation to Minerva? In the Sinon scene Virgil seems to be lending his weight to the 'rationalizing' view that the horse is essentially a man-devised *machina belli* and that the connection with Minerva is a supposititious element in the planned deceit of the Trojans. The broader tradition suggests a genuine recognition by the Greeks of Minerva's involvement and a publicly open acknowledgement of it<sup>5</sup>. According to Austin Virgil 'silently passes over the tradition', which indeed he *does do* in 17 and in Sinon's speech, which lean heavily towards the 'rationalizing' viewpoint. But an oblique reference to the horse's divine association in 5 is taken up by an overt assertion in 31 (*innuptae donum exitiale Minervae*), a 'puzzling line' on Austin's reckoning. This, I shall suggest, need not be the case. Virgil confronted a bewildering mass of conflicting material in his sources, both Greek and Latin, and chose with great care the details he wanted to emphasise<sup>6</sup>. The final selection may well have been determined by the potential weight a detail could carry in the symbolic structure.

In a penetrating analysis of the way in which the image of the serpent contributes to this structure in the second book, Bernard Knox<sup>7</sup> drew a parallel between the destructive work of the serpent-snakes and that of the Greeks, a parallel which can be focussed on a particular example. Selecting his choice of narrative detail from the conflicting traditions, Virgil has the snakes from the sea kill Laocoon's two children in front of their father (213-5) before proceeding to kill the father too. At 471ff. Pyrrhus, compared with a snake which has similar features to Minerva's *angues*, will kill Priam's son Polites in front of his father (530-32) before proceeding to kill the father too in his son's blood. Both Laocoon and Priam are killed at altars (202, 550) to emphasise the parallel sacrificial aspects of their deaths. This is again a

<sup>1</sup> *Virgilius . . . illustratus a Chr. G. Heyne*, ed. 4 cur. G. P. E. Wagner (Leipzig 1832), ad 10c.

<sup>2</sup> *Vergili Opera* with a commentary by J. Conington (London 1876), ad loc..

<sup>3</sup> *The Aeneid of Virgil: Books 1-6* ed. by R. D. Williams (London 1972), ad loc..

<sup>4</sup> Apollodorus (*Epit.* 5.20) reports the same tradition that the Greeks descended from the horse *σειρῆ ἐξάψαντες ἑαυτοὺς*, and makes the descent even more hazardous by adding the account (not in Virgil) of how Echion was killed by jumping from it.

<sup>5</sup> References are collected by R.G. Austin *Aeneidos liber secundus* (Oxford 1964) on line 15, and cf. p.126.

<sup>6</sup> 'Bewilderingly varied' is Austin's phrase (op. cit. p.95, cf. also p.xv) for the traditions Virgil inherited.

<sup>7</sup> B. M. W. Knox, 'The serpent and the flame: the imagery of the second book of the *Aeneid*', *AJP* 71 (1950), 379-400. Austin ignored Knox's article.

conscious selection of detail on Virgil's part<sup>8</sup>. The *angues* of the Laocoon scene may be said to prefigure the *coluber* of the Priam scene, and the Laocoon narrative and the Priam narrative are constructed with such a pattern in mind: the vision of the monster-snake devouring the child before the father's eyes and then killing the father as well (a story-line deliberately chosen by Virgil) was a portent to the Trojans of the fate of their own king. The selection of *two* children for Laocoon – there was another possibility – anticipates Priam's loss of two of his children, Polites and Cassandra, later in the book<sup>9</sup>. The Laocoon narrative is thus integrated with the main plot in a way which gives it an even more horrific dimension as a portent, and Priam's fate becomes the more tragic because of his failure to discern the significance of Laocoon's death for his own case.

Such a comparison is there, but it would be mistaken to stress the relation in too mechanical a way. I would like to explore the broader parallel between the sea-serpents and the collective force of the Greeks. The strength of the serpent-snake motif is cumulative, built from a number of strands of which the parallel deaths of Laocoon and Priam are only one. As Knox shows (pp.382ff.), the parallel is between Minerva's *angues* and the Greek army as an invading force: both come *a Tenedo* (203, 255), probably an original Virgilian idea for the *angues*, though it is difficult to see why their point of departure should be identified in this way unless it is to associate them with the Greeks; the sea-snakes *incumbunt pelago* (255), 'like rowers' as Austin says of the verb's implications; their red crests tower over the waves (207) like the fire signal sent up (*extulerat* 257) from the command vessel as the Greek fleet approaches the shore a few hours later; the portent of blood and fire in their eyes (210) as they advance in military style (*agmine certo* 212, cf. the Greek advance *instructis navibus* 254) prefigures what the Greeks will bring to Troy when they arrive on the shore. Yet while there is a sufficiently obvious parallel to intensify the ominous, menacing feeling which the Greek advance later arouses in us, we should guard against drawing too close a *narrative* parallel. Indeed, it is because the sequence of events and descriptive detail in the Laocoon scene is not *exactly* reproduced in the ensuing attack on the city that the evocation of Minerva's *angues* in the behaviour of the Greeks is all the more effective. The parallel is repeatedly *suggestive* of similarities, allowing the impact of one episode to intensify the impact of the other, and is not any strait-jacketed repetition. The overall picture fits in with the workings of interlocking symbolism elsewhere in the *Aeneid*.

An important part of the suggestiveness of any comparison of this kind is the presence of points of difference as well as of similarities. The features proper only to an incident or person are highlighted by being contrasted with different features of the absence of parallel features in the comparison. It is well known that many Virgilian similes work in this way, suggesting points of difference as well as points of similarity<sup>10</sup>, and I suggest that the Laocoon scene is sufficiently a prototype of the fate to befall the city to be considered an 'advance' simile of that fate in all but form. Some differences are immediately obvious: the attack of Minerva's *angues* is a public spectacle, while the Greeks advance on Troy stealthily, instilling *horror* by a *fait accompli* and not in their initial advance. Their mission is accomplished without loss to themselves, a contrast with the losses suffered by the Greeks in the earlier stages of the assault. It would not be true, however, to suggest that Minerva's *angues* meet with no resistance; they make first for the children and then confront Laocoon *auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem* (216). Laocoon's situation is later paralleled in Aeneas' equally futile gesture to save his city from the Greeks: *arma amens capio; nec sat rationis in armis* (314 – the words could equally well have been spoken by Laocoon). The overall futility of resistance shown in the death of Laocoon is seen again in the snake-like Pyrrhus' killing of the royal son and then of the royal father in the son's blood, and in the Greek slaughter of the population at Troy. The exception to this pattern is of course Aeneas himself – the son who rescues his father as well as himself from a fate from which other fathers failed to rescue either their sons or

<sup>8</sup> Other versions of Priam's death are recorded by J.G.Frazer in the Loeb *Apollodorus* (London 1921) 2, p.236, n.1, and of the killing of Laocoon's sons on pp.232ff., n.2. For the comparison of Pyrrhus as *coluber* (a description derived from *Georgic* 3) and Minerva's *angues* cf. esp. 474-5 with 206-7 and 219.

<sup>9</sup> In Cassandra's case Coroebus rushes to the rescue (407ff.) dying in the act like Laocoon before him.

<sup>10</sup> That points of difference in Virgil's similes can become 'irrational correspondences' is well explained by D. West, 'Multiple correspondence similes in the *Aeneid*', *JRS* 59 (1969), 40-49, esp. 42f.. An instance in book 9 is discussed by P.Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: cosmos and imperium* (Oxford 1986), 145.

themselves. The successful evacuation of Troy by Anchises and Aeneas thus reverses the pattern established by the fate of Laocoon and his sons and by Priam and Polites<sup>11</sup>.

Reversal of another kind is found in the case of Androgeos, the Greek who falls in with Aeneas' band and who at first might seem to provide an obstacle to the parallel I am arguing for. As Androgeos leaps back (376ff.) at the moment of his realization that he is among Trojans, Virgil uses a simile derived from *Iliad* 3 to compare him with a man who treads on a snake and starts in terror as the angry reptile rears up. If, as I have argued, it is the *Greeks* to whom the snake-motif relates right from the Laocoon scene to the Priam scene, why does Virgil seem to confuse the association here by introducing a simile which relates the snake-motif to the Trojans and casts the Greek Androgeos in the passive role of the snake's victim?<sup>12</sup> The confusion here, however, is not Virgil's but Androgeos', and his confusion is a key to the proper understanding of the passage. It was Androgeos who took the Trojans to be Greeks – *vos celsis nunc primum a navibus itis?* (375) and at the moment Androgeos realises his mistake Virgil introduces a simile for that act of realisation which vividly portrays the Trojans in the guise of snake-like Greeks in which they appeared to Androgeos. The simile portrays the Trojans *in the same way* (i.e. as Greeks and therefore snake-like) in which Androgeos envisaged them, but now no longer as potential allies (cf. *socia agmina credens* 370) but as potentially hostile (cf. 381-2), which is the usual force of the snake-motif when it applies to the Greeks proper. The apparent reversal of this motif in the simile of 378-81, then, has its origin in the confusion of Androgeos' perception and in the simile's need to portray that confusion ironically at his moment of realisation. Yet the simile does not only look back to Androgeos' confused perceptions and remind us of them: it looks forward to the immediate aftermath of this episode, when the Trojans will capitalise on their successful deception of Androgeos and actually dress themselves up as Greeks (386-95), mixing indistinguishably with the enemy (396-8). The snake-like portrayal of the Trojans in the simile already anticipates their re-appearance as 'Greeks'; the reversal of the snake-motif's associations in the simile already anticipates the reversal of roles to come.

Minerva's *angues*, their work accomplished, 'return to the protection of the goddess who sent them'<sup>13</sup>, thus confirming Minerva as the avenging deity. They find physical protection (*teguntur* 227) at Minerva's statue. For the Greeks who enter Troy the protective shield of Minerva is the wooden horse. The precise relation of Minerva to the horse at once leads us to the area of the relation of propaganda to 'reality'. The building of the horse *divina Palladis arte* (15) may mean nothing more than that she was invoked as the patron of building skills. The gradual consolidation of the link between Minerva and the horse is carried through in support of the 'lie' that it is a religious object, and culminates in Sinon's direct assertions to this effect (183ff.). Sinon's deception builds up an elaborate presentation of the horse as a religious cult-object.

To what extent is this connection between Minerva and the horse entirely Sinon's fiction? Does the connection have any basis in 'reality'? Too sharp a distinction is being drawn here, and I want to suggest that Virgil is trying to have it both ways, and succeeds. The idea that the horse is in fact merely a *machina belli* and that its religious status is a pretence is believed by the Greek leadership (*simulant* 17) and this belief is stressed by Virgil as further evidence of their duplicity. This is the side of the Greeks which Sinon will exemplify. Yet the unqualified description *innuptae donum exitiale Minervae* (31), which puzzled Austin, shows Virgil simultaneously exploiting the tradition that the horse was closely associated with, if not literally dedicated by inscription to, Minerva. This is the view evidently taken up by the Greeks at large, as well of course by the Trojans. The phrase at 321, which presents a problem to those

<sup>11</sup> For other examples of the reversal of symbolism in book 2 see B.Otis, *Virgil: a study in civilised poetry* (Oxford 1964), 248.

<sup>12</sup> Note that despite the difference in application of the snake-motif, which I am attempting to explain here, the Androgeos scene is connected to the Pyrrhus scene by their common exploitation of the snake description at *Georgic* 3.420-39. Cf. Austin, op. cit. on 381 and 474. Knox (pp.391f.) adds further interpretative detail.

<sup>13</sup> Austin, op. cit. on 226. Virgilian selectivity is again at work here. Both Apollodorus (*Epit.* 5.18) and Quintus of Smyrna (12.481) identify Apollo's temple as a refuge for the serpents. But Austin (on 226) is wrong in believing that Quintus follows the Apollo tradition entirely, for though he does have the serpents retreat to Apollo's temple, he explicitly (12.447 and 478) has them sent by Athena. The latter was of course Virgil's special choice (see Austin op. cit. p.95), emphasising her unique role in relation to the serpents.

who take the Minerva connection to be only a fabrication of Sinon and the Greek leadership, is carefully placed to warn us of what the significance will be of Laocoon's impending assault on the horse (40ff.). Virgil's exploiting of both the 'rationalizing' and the mythical traditions reaches a climax in the Laocoon episode. Laocoon challenges the horse's status as a *votum*, and if Virgil were presenting the cultic significance as truly a Greek fabrication Laocoon's challenge should vindicate the truth and expose the deception of the Greek leadership. It is the fact of Laocoon's unmistakably divine punishment by Minerva's *angues* which finally induces the Trojans to believe in Sinon's fraudulent speech (229-31). This deception brings to a climax the 'rationalizing' approach which views that cultic significance of the horse merely as a sophistic device to gain acceptance for it from the credulous Trojans (and the Greeks are known for such sophistry: *sic notus Ulixes?*). By contrast Laocoon's divine punishment is the climax of Virgil's parallel exploiting of the other tradition – that the horse was a cult-object sacred to Minerva. How otherwise is Laocoon's punishment for defiling it to be explained? As elsewhere in Virgil the 'rationalising' and 'religious' traditions run side by side, sometimes in competition, but here supporting with varying emphasis the final goal of persuasion.

If the horse can thus be considered a cult-object sacred to Minerva, then the parallel between the Greeks and Minerva's avenging *angues* will be reinforced by having the former seek refuge in Minerva's cult-object just as the *angues* do under the protection of her statue (cf. *teguntur* 227/*conduntur* 401), both cult-objects now being located together on the Trojan citadel. In this way we find that the sense in which the Greek *angues* are agents of divine vengeance entering the city in Minerva's horse is in turn reinforced by the identity of location. Moreover, the Trojan *arx* plays a significant role in unifying different elements in the story. It is the site of Minerva's temple where the serpents retreated after killing Laocoon and his sons (225-7). When Laocoon abandons the *arx* to save his sons (421) he rushes to his death<sup>14</sup>. It was from the *arx* that the Palladium was stolen by Ulysses and Diomedes (166), and it is here that the horse finds its resting-place (*sacrata sistimus arce* 245). The identity of location would thus seem to support the view to which Sinon gives voice but not credence, that the horse is a reparation for the earlier theft: the horse finds its home in the place from where the Palladium was stolen and where Minerva's shield shelters her avenging serpents. Difficult as it is to disentangle the 'facts' in Sinon's fictional fabric in which truth and falsehood are woven together with great skill, there is no doubt that the 'fact' of the Palladium's theft must be readily accepted by Greek and Trojan alike. Sinon himself may have little use for Calchas' account of the consequences of the theft (176ff.), as the Greek commanders have also (cf. 17); their sophistic emphasis on the superiority of the practical *artes* both of building (15) and of lying (195) leads them to believe that they can trick the credulous Trojans with tales of superstition and divine prophecy. But the placing of the horse on the sacred citadel strongly suggests an act of reparation for the theft of the Palladium, which in turn intensifies the association between the horse and Minerva.

As I have suggested before, though, Virgilian parallels tend to have a negative as well as a positive side. Coincidence of location may suggest an association of the horse with the Palladium and Minerva, but there is no direct assertion to that effect. This ambivalence is to be found not only in the scepticism of the Greeks which I have already discussed; the ambivalence is necessitated by a fundamental problem within the narrative, a problem which Virgil subtly exploits. For too strong an emphasis on the horse as reparation for the Palladium might require the restoration of Pallas' support for the city<sup>15</sup>, which Virgil cannot afford to suggest. So he uses both the pragmatic utilitarianism of the Greeks (the horse as *machina belli*) and the superstitious credulousness of the Trojans (the horse as *donum Minervae*) to exploit the potential of both.

Uncertainty about the horse's status means that the Greeks cannot unequivocally be the agents of

<sup>14</sup> The connection between the point of Laocoon's departure and the refuge to which the serpents escape is mentioned by Austin on 226, following H. Kleinknecht, 'Laocoon', *Hermes* 79 (1944), 78. Austin does not pursue the connection any further.

<sup>15</sup> See Austin's objections on p. 85 to Sinon's 'odd tale'. Odd as the tale may be, it is not entirely 'rigmarole' as Austin suggests, for some elements in it (e.g. the theft of the Palladium) would be acknowledged as 'fact' on both sides. What Sinon does is to weave together the 'superstitious' response to the Palladium (and hence to the horse) shown in the reactions of the Trojans and Calchas with the practical cynicism of the Greek leadership which exploits the superstitious reaction for its own ends.

Minerva's anger in the way her *angues* were, nor can the human operation proceed with the ruthless efficiency which characterises the attack of the serpents. The parallel between the Greeks and the serpents thus has its implied contrasts. The immediate success of the sea-serpents, who overcome all resistance and can return unscathed to the goddess's protections, contrasts with the more difficult and desperate struggle put up by the human attackers. As often when animal similes are used to illustrate human activity, there is an underlying contrast present between the mechanical efficiency with which the animals perform their tasks and the weary, debilitating toil which those same tasks become for human beings. The human effort has to be so very much greater, success is so much more unpredictable, the very act of trying is so much more perilous. In 400-401 these Greek *angues* do not manage to escape (*diffugiunt* 399, cf. *effugiunt* 226) to the physical protection of Minerva's cult-object with their task efficiently and speedily performed. Their flight is initiated *formidine turpi* (400), and is *turpis* perhaps precisely because their cowardly retreat contrasts so sharply with the retreat of Minerva's own *angues*, bloated with their success over an easy prey (226-7). The parallel status of the Greek *angues* is reinforced by the comparison, as is also the more hazardous and destructive nature of the human enterprise.

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Review: **Duncan F. Kennedy** (Bristol)

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Theodore D. Papanghelis, *Propertius: a Hellenistic Poet on Love and Death*. Cambridge UP 1987. Pp.xii + 236. Cloth, £25. ISBN 0-521-32314-2

*My thanks to Charles Martindale for subjecting a draft of this review to his characteristically incisive scrutiny.*

In this book, Papanghelis (hereafter P.) explores Propertius' concern with the association of love and death: not 'love until death' or 'death in and because of love' (p.1) but 'love as death' (cf. p.29), not a metaphor, rather a radical identification in which Propertius' concept of love is expressed 'within the frame of various death fantasies' and 'where the one comes to be envisaged in the pictorial and conceptual terms pertaining to the other' (p.1).

The theme of love until death is sporadically present in Book 1 (Ch.2), but only after its programmatic presentation in the second half of 2.1 does love as death become 'obsessive' in Book 2. Through a series of readings of particular poems, P. explores its manifestations in the themes of witchcraft (Ch.3, on 2.1), funeral (Ch.4, on 2.13), shipwreck (Ch.5, on 2.26b) and *crime passionnel* (Ch.6, on 2.8). In the course of these readings and in Ch.7, a number of poems from book 2 are briefly discussed. P. then moves ahead to 4.7 (Ch.8), which he treats at length as a 'specimen of Propertius' late manner', stylistically and thematically distinct from Book 2.

For P., Propertius' treatment of the death theme is not gloomy but witty, ironical and above all sensuous and decadent. Here is the key to P.'s reading: Propertius is seen as a *fin-de-siècle* 'aesthetic-decadent'. For P., this is not simply a suggestive analogy: the identification is total most of the time; Baudelaire, Swinburne and Pater are invoked as parallels as frequently as Callimachus or Theocritus. P. sees the Hellenistic poets, Propertius and the Late Romantics as manifestations of a single European tradition that reaches its apogee in the Late Romantics. P. expresses all this in a virtuosic and, for one whose mother tongue is not English, astonishing stylistic tour de force, an elegant evocation of the prose of the Late Romantics.

The poems P. treats respond well to this mode of reading. He establishes the theme he has chosen as an important one, and his observations are never less than elegant, subtle and incisive. And yet, for all the admiration it evokes, the book raises some serious questions. The assimilation of Propertius to the Romantic tradition is pursued relentlessly, and so totally does P. align himself with the assumptions and values of that tradition that everything that lies outside is invisible to him. Romantic discourse eschews

socio-historical explanations, and P. makes this a point of principle<sup>1</sup>. Take for example his treatment of the couplet 2.1.47f.

*laus in amore mori: laus altera si datur uno  
posse frui: fruar o solus amore meo!*

P. offers a convincing discussion of the assonance and etymological word-play in the phrase *in amore mori* (p.41), and argues persuasively that it is programmatic for the treatment of the concept of love in Book 2, underlining his point by making the phrase his own epigraph for each of Chapters 3 to 7. The word *laus*, however, is almost entirely ignored in the discussion and forms no part of the epigraph. Such a reading concentrates, in the best Romantic fashion, on the individual and his sensibility to the exclusion of the social dimension of the utterance. And yet, to give a context to his theme, Propertius has chosen a word, *laus*, which comes straight from the Roman socio-political register, and he emphasises its use by repetition (*laus altera*). The shock value lies not only in the association of love and death, but in seeing it as a source of *laus*.

This is not an isolated example. When explanations are sought, for example for interest in magic in the Augustan Age (p.40) or, crucially, the prominence of death in the poetry of Propertius (p.201), social explanations are introduced only to be dismissed immediately in favour of a formalistic appeal to literary tradition, which is presented as forestalling the need for further discussion<sup>2</sup>. The reductiveness of this position is obvious and, as the passages quoted indicate, sensed by P., but pushed to the margin by his espousal of the famous and characteristic pose of the Aesthetic Movement, 'Art for Art's sake' (cf. especially pp.212-216).

However, this is always open to the argument that language and meaning are socially constituted phenomena<sup>3</sup>, and art and writing are social acts; as is their interpretation. An artistic theory can as a strategy deny or reject this and can even persuade some of its 'truth'. The case of Oscar Wilde is illuminating. Whatever about his explicit pronouncements on Art, no writer actually did more to situate his work within a specific discourse so as to blur the distinction between Art and Life<sup>4</sup>. All theories of art can be seen to have a social and political dimension simply by asking what their function is. 'Art for Art's sake' has been read as arising together with, but as a differential attitude to, the increasing bourgeoisification of life in the latter part of the nineteenth century<sup>5</sup>. Although this posture was deeply internalised as a belief by many of its proponents, it has not been as easy to accept in its own terms at face value, as P. seems to do<sup>6</sup>, since it collided with the values of that society in a trail of skidmarks over the sheets of the Savoy hotel.

P.'s investment in these ideas is total. 'Types of sensibility', he remarks (p.216), 'are limited

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp.215f.: 'in surveying the socio-historical breeding-ground of an artistic revolution, a thought must be spared for the vagaries of extraordinary individuals. The best poets may mark "the growing points of a culture and . . . bear witness to its sensibility", but they must also set fashions that cannot be *completely*, or *exclusively*, accounted for in socio-historical terms. There must be an internal history of artistic temperament that *partly* eludes the historical mould' (italics mine). 'Completely', 'exclusively' and 'partly' acknowledge the pressure to grant a validity to such explanations that is belied in practice. The rhetoric of concessions conceals the process of marginalisation. For a similar outlook cf. R. O. A. M. Lyne, 'Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Callimachus and l'art pour l'art', *MD* 12 (1984), 9-34; ' . . . many artistic impulses, even some that are apparently artificial. A poet may be spiritually related to another without being significantly influenced by him or related in terms of tradition. Artistic impulses recur at different times and in different places, perhaps nursed by a definable set of socio-historical circumstances, and perhaps not' (p.34).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p.201: 'If in the main body of this study I have tried to see love and death mainly against the Hellenistic background, it is because I believe that over and above the undeniable contributions of contemporary experience and individual life, the artistic formulation those themes receive and their patterns of *rapprochement* are due to, and can best be discussed [P.'s emphasis] in terms of, the techniques and thematic emphases of Hellenistic poetry in general.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. John B. Thompson, *Studies in the theory of ideology* (Oxford 1984), 1-15.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Edward W. Said, *The world, the text, and the critic* (London 1984), 40.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory* (Oxford 1983), 18-22.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Lyne (op. cit. n.1 above), commenting on Oscar Wilde on the superiority of Art over Life: 'Much of this is clearly or nearly sometimes true' (pp.29f.).

across history; history is likely to repeat itself in the aesthetic sphere'. He sees Romanticism as the expression of a universal, a Platonic form, partially grasped by the Hellenistic poets and Propertius and finding a manifestation almost perfect in the works of the late Romantics. This view makes possible P.'s constant recourse to corroboration of his reading of Propertius from parallels in later poetry and art and, on the occasions he briefly discusses the legitimacy of applying Romantic concepts and terminology to Propertius, it allows him to take their appropriateness as self-evident<sup>7</sup>.

But the applicability of terms like 'sensitivity' and 'Romanticism' to the ancient world is not so clear-cut or unproblematic as P. and the others who have recently argued for it might wish us to believe<sup>8</sup>. Their arguments construct a notion, dominant and unquestioned within this discourse, of tradition as something static, an entity represented by a canon of great works, not dependent on any external interests or processes and, taken together, constituting a given cultural identity. Tradition in this view is unproblematic and apolitical in that all the acts of categorisation, all the judgements of what has been included and excluded and why, have been elided. The desire for *continuity*, to find the *same* in the past, prompts this essentialising, metaphysical move, characteristic of liberal humanism, that established tradition as 'sameness'.

An alternative view of tradition, characteristic of new historicist approaches to the past, sees it as an active, open process intimately connected with the pursuit of particular interests: the selective appropriation of the past to serve a controlling vision of the present and project that vision into the future<sup>9</sup>. This view puts its emphasis on ruptures and discontinuities and confers significance on the 'otherness' and specificity of the past. 'Continuity' is criticised as illusory – the incidental contiguity of items wrenched from their original contexts, described in terms which suggest they are instances of the same thing and arranged in chronological order with the resulting sequence being deemed a 'tradition'. In practice this process is more complex and succeeds in concealing its particular logic. Classical texts were one of the main sources for the construction of Romanticism (P. cites a poem of Dowson [pp.209f.] which has an epigraph from Propertius). P.'s critical discourse replicates this procedure and presents its unexamined involvement in reproducing these assumptions and values (the action of making them 'the same') as self-evident corroboration of them.

More is at stake for P. in his evocation of Romanticism than richness of analogy or the creation of a rich stylistic brocade. Issues of cultural identity and affiliation are never far from the surface. He appeals to 'European modes of sensitivity', 'topoi of Western culture' and speaks of 'the Propertian treatment of erotic death' as 'one of the tokens of unity of Western literature'. The European identity, itself partly the creation of Romanticism, is built on a strongly ethnocentric view of cultural superiority, formed on principles not only of inclusion, but of exclusion and Otherness as well<sup>10</sup>, an axis that pivots on the geopolitical distinction of West and East<sup>11</sup>. The formation of such cultural identities is a matter of contestation over who and what is to be included and excluded and by whom. In particular the margins, the site of boundary disputes, can be fraught with anxiety for those involved. Classical Greece is culturally central to the European identity, but modern Greece has held an historically geopolitically ambivalent position. Historically, Romanticism offers the most powerful recuperation of modern Greece for the West and for Europe, and herein may lie one of its attractions for P.

P.'s is just one (albeit *sui generis* in its qualities and some of the issues it raises) of a number of recent books and articles on Latin literary criticism to adopt a Romantic viewpoint, and this phenomenon is worth some thought. On the level of cultural politics, Romantic criticism has emerged for a number of Latin scholars in Britain as the discourse in which the assertion of the autonomy of art and

<sup>7</sup> Cf. pp.17, 205, 216 and 84 n.19: 'One may single out here Robertson's . . . "a disturbing pre-Raphaelite vividness", for it shows well how a Propertian pictorial effect may *compel* recourse to the modern parallel' (my emphasis).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. for example Lyne (n.1 above) or Niall Rudd, 'Romantic Love in Classical Times?', *Ramus* 10 (1981), 140-158, 'No romantic love in antiquity? Shakespeare would have rejected such a notion with incredulity. And so should we' (p155).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Frank Lentricchia, *Criticism and social change* (Chicago and London 1983), 125.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London 1985), 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.



literature is taking place. Romantic criticism receives its philosophical underpinning from aesthetics, which constitutes itself as an autonomous discipline precisely by the exclusion of the social and the political<sup>12</sup> and exists (as all disciplines do) as an exploration of the problems generated by the terms of its own definition. In seeking out the peculiar properties of art or of the faculty of a disinterested aesthetic judgement brought to bear upon them, it provides a theoretical framework for the mystique of Art, the authority of the interpreter held to possess such a faculty, and the self-image of the interpreter as a high priest of culture somehow above politics.

Such ideas are open to appropriation by divergent political interests. On the one hand they can be transformed into ideologies of freedom, emancipation and revolution (as with Schiller<sup>13</sup>, Blake and Shelley and the literary theories of 'metaphysical' Marxism<sup>14</sup>, when a discrepancy is perceived between the worlds of art and historical reality and it is held that society should embody the transcendental values attributed to art<sup>15</sup>. Alternatively, they can be mobilised as arguments against political change (as in Coleridge and Eliot, and in much of the criticism that would attract the label 'Romantic' these days), informing the ideology of those institutions (such as education or the literary and artistic establishment) which reproduce the culture by affirming its norms, validating and policing its inclusions and exclusions in accordance with an appeal to certain things that are deemed to lie beyond change – part of the hegemonic process in which is enacted the system of repressions that favour some in society at the expense of others whilst reconciling its members to its conditions of life and the structures of power and authority which accompany them<sup>16</sup>.

An ideological map of this country would show the upsurge of Romanticism in Latin studies as a local manifestation of a larger movement associated with right-wing political philosophy which aims to recuperate aesthetics as an object of enquiry in a conscious move to counter the claims of 'literary theory' and 'cultural studies', whose characteristic strategy, in an avowed attempt to effect social change, is to demystify art (and other categories granted transcendental status) by denying its autonomy, its independence from society and politics, its claim to embody fixed and transcendental values<sup>17</sup>. Such ideas seem to threaten to disturb a belief in the unruffled continuity of tradition and a sense of the direct presence of Truth, and to challenge the complacent and unproblematic self-understanding which is the characteristic ideology of elite power and institutions in our society.

There is a lesson here beyond the mobility of symbolic systems such as 'Romanticism', their potentiality to be appropriated by conflicting and apparently contradictory interests, and the fluidity of all categorising terms such as 'left-wing', 'revolutionary', 'reactionary', 'right-wing'. 'Literary theory', which is seen, and sees itself as, 'oppositional' is nonetheless subject to the logic of hegemonic culture and its appropriative power<sup>18</sup>, and can imperceptibly slide from being a strategy of subversion into one of authority and control.

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<sup>12</sup> The term 'aesthetic' is one of the 'keywords' which enacts a conceptual disjunction between art and society, cf. Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (London 1983), s.v. For an overview of studies into the historical constitution of the autonomous sphere of art cf. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the avant-garde* (trans. Michael Shaw, Manchester 1984), 35-46. Autonomy is 'a category whose characteristic is that it describes something real (the detachment of art as a special sphere of human activity from the nexus of the praxis of life) but simultaneously expresses this real phenomenon in concepts that block recognition of the social determinacy of the process' (p.36).

<sup>13</sup> 'We must be at liberty to restore by means of a higher Art this wholeness in our nature which Art has destroyed' (Schiller, *On the aesthetic education of man* (trans. Reginald Snell, New York 1965), 45, quoted by Bürger (op. cit. n.12 above, p.45).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. for example Theodor Adorno, 'Commitment', in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, ed., *The essential Frankfurt School reader*, New York 1982, 301-18: 'Even in the most sublimated work of art there is a hidden "it should be otherwise". When a work is merely itself and no other thing, as in a pure pseudo-scientific construction, it becomes bad art – literally pre-artistic. The moment of true volition, however, is mediated through nothing other than the form of the work itself, whose crystallization becomes an analogy of that other condition which should be. As eminently constructed and produced objects, works of art, even literary ones, point to a practice from which they abstain: the creation of a just life' (p.317).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Eagleton, *Literary theory*, 20.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Said, *The world, the text, and the critic*, 9-12.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Christopher Norris, 'Aesthetics and politics: reading Roger Scruton', in *The contest of faculties* (London 1985), 123-138.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and literature* (Oxford 1977), 112-113.